
Title: My Story

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'Twas on a chill
night, when the moon
shone pasty-faced
above the horizon,
balanced on the
towers of Lord
British's castle, that
the events I am about
to relate took place,
some years ago now. I
witnessed them all
from my tiny
mousehole.

Milords British and
Blackthorn are
accustomed to a game
of chess 'pon an
evening, over which
they argue the issues
that affect the course
of the realm. Lord
Blackthorn was on his
way to Lord British's
chambers, and Lord
British stood by a
window casement,
just having finished
setting the pieces
upon the board.

Suddenly the
shutters blew open,
and Lord British fell
to the ground, one
hand shielding his
eyes. A chill wind
entered the room, and
it seemed a gash was
torn in the very air.
Through the gash I
could see stars and
swirling clouds of
stellar dust, and a
coldness sucked all
the warmth from the
air. A terrible wind
tossed books and
blankets across the
room, and furniture

toppled.

From within this
gash issued a great
voice, unlike any I
have ever heard. And
these are the words it
spoke (for I
memorized them most
carefully):

"Greetings, Lord
British. I am the
Time Lord, a being
from beyond your
dimension, as thou
art from a world
other than Sosaria. I
am here to bring thee
warning. Dost thou
recall how long ago a
mysterious Stranger
came to Sosaria and
saved the world from
the evil wizard
Mondain? He
shattered the Gem of
Immortality, within
which dwelled a
perfect likeness of
this world."

Lord British slowly
stood and faced the
hole in the air. "I
remember," he said.
"Oft have I wished
that stranger would
return."

"He hath returned,"
spoke the voice. "But
not to here. When the
Gem was shattered, a
thousand shards were
scattered across the
dimensions, and in
each shard there is a
perfect likeness of
this world. And thou
dost live upon one
such shard, for thou
art not of the true
world-thou art
merely a reflection."

Lord British looked
shaken by this, and I
did not know what to
think! Was I merely a
shadow of the real
me, which lives still
somewhere else

across uncounted
universes?

"My task is to heal
this shattered world,
Lord British," said
the voice. "And I seek
to enlist thee in my
cause. Be warned that
in this case, healing
carries with it a
terrible price."

Concern warred
with curiosity on my
liege's face, but ever
one to shoulder a
burden, he
straightened and
faced the gash in the
air bravely. "Name
thy price."

"A shard of a
universe is a
powerful thing, and a
universe shattered is
always in danger
from the powers of
darkness. Already
three shards were
turned to evil, and
sent to plague the
original universe in
the form of
Shadowlords. Many
times have I brought
the Stranger back to
Britannia, to preserve
it from its own folly
or from outside
dangers. Yet as long
as the world
remaineth in pieces,
it remaineth
vulnerable. We must
bring the shards into
harmony, so that they
resonate in such a
manner that matches
the original universe.
Then the two
universes shall
merge, and be again
as one."

"But if we are only
shadows..." Lord
British said
wonderingly.

The light from the
stars within the hole

seemed to dim.

"Indeed, the
reflections shall
become one with the
original. Thou wouldst
cease to be as thou
art, and become part
of the larger you.
Thou shalt not die;
however, uncounted
generations have
passed and borne
children since that
day, and they have no
counterparts. They
would perish utterly."

Lord British sagged
in shock, realizing
the terrible price that
would be paid to heal
the universe. "All of
my people," he
breathed.

"'Tis for the greater
good."

Lord British bowed
his head.

'Twas then I saw
the movement by the
door, half-hid by the
heavy red curtains.
Lord Blackthorn stood
there, concealed from
the rest of the room,
his face white. How
long had he been
listening? I cannot
say, yet I suspect
that he had heard all
that the mysterious
voice had to say.

"How then, shall I
aid thee?" Lord
British said,
weariness in his
voice.

"Aid the nobility that
resideth in the
human heart. Protect
the Virtues that so
recently came to thee
in thought late at
night. They are the
Virtues of life, as
your counterpart
understands them to
be. For when thy
populace doth live and

breathe these Virtues,
shall it match the
true Britannia, and
thy shard shall
rejoin with it."

The gash in the air
began to close, and
with it warmth stole
back into the room.

"I was going to
discuss my idea with
Blackthorn tonight,"
Lord British
breathed. "Have I no
thoughts that are my
own? Is my life but
a reflection of
another me?"

"Nay," said the
voice, smaller through
the diminished
opening. "Say, rather,
that you are parallel,
for there is no
guarantee that thou
shalt accomplish what
I have set thee to. I
speak tonight to a
thousand of thee, and
ask the same of all.
Perhaps not all shall
seek to aid me." And
with that, the gash
closed, and the voice
was gone, leaving a
room that appeared
tossed by a mighty
storm.

"Destroy the world
to save the universe,"
Lord British said
bitterly. "I do not
wonder that some
may balk."

Lord Blackthorn
collected himself, and
strode into the room,
a decent mimicry of
surprise on his face.
"My liege! What has
happened here?" he
exclaimed, feigning
dismay well. But not
well enough to fool
his old friend, whose
eyes narrowed at
seeing him there.

"How much didst

thou hear?" demanded Lord British.

"Why, nothing," managed Blackthorn, his head ducked away from his friend, as he bent to retrieve the fallen chess pieces. "I merely came for our game of chess."

Together they righted the pedestal table, and set the pieces upon the black and white squares.

"Such simplicity to the game, Blackthorn," mused Lord British, idly brushing one finger against the board. "Black and white, each to its own color, as if life were so simple. What think you?"

Blackthorn sat heavily on a hassock beside the chess table.

"I think that matters are never so simple, my liege. And that I would regret it deeply if someone, such as a friend, saw it thus."

Lord British's eyes met his. "Yet sometimes one must sacrifice a pawn to save a king."

Lord Blackthorn met his gaze squarely.

"Even pawns have lives and loves at home, my lord." Then he reached out for a pawn, and firmly moved it forward two squares. "Shall we play a game?" he asked.

The chess game that night was a draw, and they played grimly.

And the next day, Lord British gathered the nobles to proclaim the idea of a new

system of Virtues,
and declared that
shrines should be
built across the land.

Lord Blackthorn
opposed it bitterly,
and many thought
him strange for doing
so, for ever had he
been a noble and
upright man, and
ever had he and Lord
British been in
accord. Declaring that
he should start his
own shrine, he
departed the castle
that day to live in a
tower in a lake on the
north side of the
city.

They are still the
best of friends, yet a
sadness hangs
between them, as if
they were forced into
making choices that
appealed not to them.
And at night, when I
creep softly from one
corner of my liege's
bedchamber to
another, I sometimes
see him take a pawn
from his night table,
and hold it in his
hand, and quietly
weep.

But I am but a
mouse, and none hear
me. This tale goes
unknown, save for
my writing these
enormous letters with
mine ink-stained tiny
paws for thee to
read, for I fear
indeed for our world
and for our people in
these perilous times.